

**Montana Department of Military Affairs
Disaster & Emergency Services Division
State Emergency Coordination Center**

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Situation Report for August 13, 2003 (issued @ 14:00 hrs.)

Wildfires of 2003

Attention * - New information shown in today's report displayed in ***Bold Italics*** type.

I. Montana Fire Conditions and Background Information:

Nationally 20 New Starts occurred in the Large Fire Category. Of these 20 New Starts 14 Large Fires were in Montana. In Montana, there is currently 199,000 acres of active burning with 5900 personnel assigned. Two Area Commands have been established within the state, the Northwest Area Command (Flathead) and the Southwest Area Command (Missoula). Fire behavior has been Very Active to Extreme in most areas west of the divide and in South Central to Southwest Montana due to continued warm, dry, and breezy conditions.

II. Current Montana Fire Situation: *(as reported to NRCG August 11, 2003 (2345))*

A. Large Fires

- **Southwest Montana Area Command (Greenhoe) will be managing large fires in the Lolo National Forest and the Southwest Land Office of the Montana Department of Natural Resources.**
 - **Cherry Creek – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Swope) – 3,600 acres, 10% contained, 12 miles SE of Thompson Falls, MT.**
 - **Black Mountain 2 – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Dietrich) – 409 acres, 0% contained, 9 miles W of Missoula, Montana.**
 - **Dirty Ike – 600 acres, 0% contained, 3 miles NE of Clinton, Montana. Chrisman's Type 2 Incident Management Team has been ordered to manage this fire.**
 - **Boles/Rattlesnake Complex – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Hoff) - 5,000 acres, 5% contained, 15-20 miles NE of Missoula, Montana. This complex consists of the Boles Meadow fire (2,500 acres – 0% contained) and at least 6 unstaffed fires in the Rattlesnake Wilderness and National Recreation Area.**
 - **Fish Creek Complex – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Benes), 6,275 acres, 0% contained, 24 miles W of Missoula, Montana. This complex consists of 8 fires.**
 - **North Howard Complex – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Kechter), 1,775 acres, 5% contained, 16 miles W of Missoula, Montana. This complex consists of North Howard and East Fork Petty Creek fire.**
 - **Cooney Ridge #3 Complex – 3,000 acres, 0 % contained, 11 miles E of Florence, Montana. Type 2 Incident Management Team (Sandman) has been assigned to manage this complex.**

- Twin Lakes – 120 acres, 4 miles S of Georgetown Lake, Montana. Type 2 Incident Management Team (McElwain) has been ordered.
- Beaver Lake Complex – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Frye), 2,500 acres, 5% contained, 19 miles SW of Missoula, Montana.
- Hobble – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Larsen) will assume command at 0600 8/12, 34,000 acres, 40% contained, 6 miles E of Greycliff, Montana.
- Flathead Area Command (Mann) is managing the large fires on the Flathead National Forest and Glacier National Park.
 - Crazy Horse – 4,000 acres, 0% contained, 10 miles NE of St. Ignatius, Montana.
 - Robert – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Ferguson), 38,350 acres, 60% contained, 8 miles N of Columbia Falls, Montana.
 - Wedge Canyon – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Hart), 30,594 acres, 70% contained, 20 miles E of Eureka, Montana.
 - Trapper Creek Complex – Complex is 21,840 acres, 65% contained. This Complex is made up of the Trapper Creek (15,926 acres – 60% contained), Trout (1/4 acre – 100% contained) and the Paul Bunyan (300 acres – 100% contained), Wolf Gun (5,613 acres – 55% contained). This complex is located 45 statute miles NE of Kalispell, Montana.
 - Little Salmon Creek Complex – Fire Use Management Team (Rath) assumed command today. This 18,237 acre lightning caused Wildland Fire Use complex is located 47 miles SE of Kalispell, Montana in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. This complex is made up of 15 fires; 4 fires are larger than 10 acres – Little Salmon (17,690 acres), Lime Cr. (126 acres), Pagoda (153 acres) and Some Cr. (258 acres).
- Rough Draw – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Whitney) - 500 acres, 0% contained, 8 miles S of Livingston, Montana.
- Gold 1 – 2,500 acres, 0% contained, 9 miles NE of Corvallis, Montana. Type 2 Incident Management Team (Philbin) has been ordered to manage this fire.
- Clear/Nez Complex – Fire Use Management Team (Cones). This 1,200 acre lightning-caused Wildland Fire Use complex is located 41 miles SW of Lolo, Montana in the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness. This complex of fires, made up of 13 on the Clearwater and Nez Perce National Forests, is being managed to accomplish resource objectives.
- East – 10 miles E of Fishing Bridge Junction, Yellowstone NP, 1,909 acres, 0% contained.
- Pioneer Lake – 128 acres, 100% contained, 23 miles S of Bozeman, Montana.
- Lande – 1,250 acres, 100% contained, 7 miles NE of Pryor, Montana.
- Wrangler – 6 miles W of Broadus, Montana, 450 acres, 0% contained.
- Graveyard – 25 miles SW of Miles City, Montana, 200 acres, 0% contained.
- Rough Creek – 6 miles W. of Broadus, Montana, 640 acres, 0% contained.
- Little Hawk – 10 miles N of Busby, MT – 500 acres, 0% contained.
- Hopeful 2 – 300 acres NW of Granite Pass, 0% contained; this will be the last report unless significant activity occurs.
- Squaw – 300 acres in the upper West Fork of Squaw Creek; this will be the last report until significant activity occurs.

- **Bronc – 101 acres 19 miles W of Hamilton, Montana; this fire being managed under confine strategy.**
- **Brushy Spoon – 250 acres 24 miles W of Darby, Montana; this wildland fire use fire is being managed for resource benefit.**

Reported Major Fire Activity: *Report Date: August 10th, 2003*

CHERRY CREEK:	Cost: \$ 1,071,800	% CNT: 10%
BLACK MOUNTAIN 2:	Cost: \$ 150,000	% CNT: 0%
DIRTY IKE	Cost: \$ 75,000	% CNT: 0%
BOLES/RATTLESNAKE	Cost: \$ 152,000	% CNT: 5%
NORTH HOWARD COMPLEX	Cost: \$ 362,710	% CNT: 5 %
COONEY RIDGE	Cost: \$ 75,000	% CNT: 0%
TWIN LAKES	Cost: \$ NR	% CNT: 10%
HOBBLE FIRE	Cost: \$ 650,000	% CNT: 40%
CRAZY HORSE	Cost: \$ NR	% CNT: 0%
ROBERT FIRE	Cost: \$ 13,191,457	% CNT: 60%
WEDGE CANYON	Cost: \$ 19,600,000	% CNT: 70%
TRAPPER CREEK COMPLEX	Cost: \$ 3,155,899	% CNT: 65%
LITTLE SALMON CREEK	Cost: \$ 827,000	% CNT: NR%
ROUGH DRAW	Cost: \$ 325,000	% CNT: 0%
GOLD 1	Cost: \$ 200,000	% CNT: 0%
SLIM'S COMPLEX	Cost: \$ 10,770,000	% CNT: 60%
BUTCHER CREEK	Cost: \$ NR	% CNT: 100%
LANDE FIRE	Cost: \$ NR	% CNT: 100%
COVE	Cost: \$ NR	% CNT: NR%
GRANITE	Cost: \$ 5,000	% CNT: NR%
PIONEER LAKE	Cost: \$ 306,948	% CNT: 100%
BRONC	Cost: \$ 500	% CNT: NR%
EAST FIRE	Cost: \$ NR	% CNT: NR%
GRAVEYARD	Cost: \$ NR	% CNT: NR%
BIG SAND	Cost: \$ NR	% CNT: 0%
ROUGH CREEK	Cost: \$ NR	% CNT: NR%
ALLIGATOR	Cost: \$ NR	% CNT: 100%
LITTLE HAWK	Cost: \$ NR	% CNT: 0%

B. Initial Attack **Heavy initial attack – 81 new fires for 15,871 acres**

C. State Forecast For Montana

STATE FORECAST FOR MONTANA...UPDATED
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE GREAT FALLS MT
1000 AM MDT WED AUG 13 2003

WEST OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

Today - Partly Cloudy. Areas Of Smoke. Slight Chance Of Thunderstorms South. Highs 85 To 95.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Evening Thunderstorms. Lows 47 To 57.

Thursday - Mostly Cloudy With A Chance Of Thunderstorms North. Partly Cloudy With A Slight Chance Of Thunderstorms South. Highs 89 To 99.

CENTRAL MONTANA

Today - Partly Cloudy. Isolated Showers And Thunderstorms In The Afternoon. Highs In The Mid 80s To Mid 90s.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy. Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Evening Then Slight

Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms After Midnight. Lows In The Lower 50s To Lower 60s.

Thursday - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms. Highs In The 90s.

SOUTHWEST MONTANA

Today - Partly Cloudy. Isolated Showers And Thunderstorms. Highs In The Mid 80s To Mid 90s.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms. Lows In The Mid 50s.

Thursday - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms. Highs In The Lower 80s To Mid 90s.

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN MONTANA

Today - Partly Cloudy. A Chance Of Afternoon Thunderstorms West. Highs In The Upper 90s To 110.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy With A Chance Of Thunderstorms...Mainly In The Evening. Lows In The 60s To Lower 70s.

Thursday - Partly Cloudy With A Chance Of Thunderstorms West. Mostly Sunny East. Highs In The Upper 90s To 110.

III. - Summary of Actions being taken by Local Government Officials:

Local government resources from various jurisdictions have been actively engaged in fire fighting efforts, particularly during the past several days. The evacuations of residents whose properties have been threatened have been conducted as required.

<u>Local Emergency and Disaster Declarations</u>		<u>Date Filed</u>
Cascade County	Emergency Declaration (Box Canyon/Long Mtn.)	7/15/03
Garfield County	Disaster Declaration (Missouri Breaks)	7/15/03
Beaverhead County	Emergency Resolution (multiple fires)	7/17/03
Ravalli County	Emergency Declaration (Big Creek)	7/20/03
Flathead County	Emergency Declaration (Wedge Canyon)	7/21/03
Sanders County	Resolution (Stage II Fire Restrictions)	7/29/03
Fallon County	Resolution (Stage I Fire Restrictions)	8/04/03
CSKT Flathead	Resolution (Tribal/Forest/Range Closure)	8/04/03
Blaine County	Emergency Declaration (150 acre fire)	8/06/03
Park County	Emergency Declaration (Rough Draw Fire)	8/11/03
Sweet Grass County	Disaster Declaration – (Hobble [Diamond] Fire)	8/12/03
<i>Custer County</i>	<i>Emergency Declaration</i>	<i>8/13/03</i>
<i>Musselshell County</i>	<i>Emergency Declaration</i>	<i>8/13/03</i>

The Flathead County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution on August 4th, 2003 stating that because the weather forecasts indicated no relief from the dry conditions and fires continued in the county it was “resolved that stage II fire restrictions on all State forested lands and all private forested lands open to the public” will be in effect until otherwise stated.

IV. - Summary of State Activities and Resources Committed:

State Declarations:

On 8/07/03, Governor Judy Martz signed Executive Order # 16-03 in which she declared a statewide disaster thereby enabling mobilization of state resources (including the Montana

National Guard) should they be needed to help protect the life, health and/or property of Montana's citizens. This declaration supplements Executive Order # 14-03, a statewide emergency declaration issued on 7/18/03.

FEMA Declarations:

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Grant approved on July 23rd, 2003 for Missouri Breaks Complex fire.

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Grant approved on July 25th, 2003 for Flathead County's Wedge Canyon and Roberts fires.

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Grant approved on August 11th, 2003 for the Hobble Fire.

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Grant approved on August 13th, 2003 for a number of fires burning in Missoula and Ravalli counties, as well as the Cherry Creek Fire in Sanders County and Mineral County.

Requests for State Assistance:

- The Montana National Guard is assisting "initial attack" fire suppression operations by supplying 3 UH-60 (Blackhawk) Helicopters modules and one UH-1 Helicopter module and approximately 45 soldiers. One Blackhawk helicopter module is currently assigned to the Flathead Interagency Dispatch Center, another is assigned to the Helena Interagency Dispatch Center, and the third is assigned to Missoula. The UH-1 helicopter module is currently deployed to Billings. The Montana National Guard Personnel Resources currently allocated to wild land fire suppression duties stands at 45. The National Guard will be rotating in new air crews in Helena and Kalispell this weekend.
- One NG Liaison Officer has been assigned to the Northern Rockies Coordination Center (NGCC) in Missoula.
- MT Highway Patrol and MT Department of Transportation are supporting fire efforts with local jurisdictions and fire management to limit travel disturbances.
- Park County Commissioners issued a written request for State Assistance for a wildland fire (Roughdraw) that started August 10th, 2003.

Status of State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)

- Montana DES is providing support to local governments through the State Emergency Coordination Center in Helena. The SECC is currently operating at Activation Level III. Level III operations include a full staff 0800-1700 during weekdays with a duty officer on call after hours. Weekend operations will be staffed at Level II from 0800-1700 unless it becomes necessary to advance to a higher activation level.
- Currently DES Agency Representatives are assigned to:
 - Missoula Area Command
 - Sweetgrass County (Hobble Fire)
 - Northwest Area Command Joint Information Center

The State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC) will continue to monitor conditions and is prepared to provide 24-hour incident support to local governments. After office hours (i.e., 1700-0700) support is available through the DES Duty Officer who may be reached at (406) 841-3911.

Addendums to Situation Report

As of: **August 11th, 2003**

General Fire Information and Severity to Date

- Missoula Area command has been ordered to manage large fires in the Missoula Area.
- Large Season ending storm not expected until mid-September or early October.
- Closures are likely to remain in effect for the remainder of the season.
- Plum Creek has closed all private and public use on their holdings, logging operations are also shut down.
- Currently there are no overnight facilities at Apgar or West Glacier.
- ***Smoke has dropped back into the north Flathead Valley and West Glacier areas which are currently at VERY UNHEALTHY levels. Residents of Flathead Valley can get local information updated as required from the Flathead County Health Department. Smoke is persisting in the Bitterroot Valley and the conditions in Stevensville are at the UNHEALTHY level this morning. The concentrations in Missoula, Helena, and Kalispell are at UNHEALTHY FOR SENSITIVE INDIVIDUALS and still trending up. MODERATE levels of smoke are reported at Polson and Butte.***
- ***Two major power lines were damaged Monday by the Hobble fire burning between Big Timber and Reed Point. The fire destroyed at least 21 support structures on a 230-kilovolt line and 26 support structures on a 161-kilovolt line. Both lines stretch between Livingston and Billings. This indirectly caused power outages Monday for several thousand customers.***

Fire Restrictions and Closures

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Restrictions</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Northwestern Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
Southwestern Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
Central Montana Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
South Central Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
Eastern Montana Zone		
<u>Stage I Restrictions (Billings)</u>		July 18, 2003
<u>Stage II Restrictions</u>		
State & Private: Carbon, Stillwater, Treasure, Sweet Grass, Mussellshell		July 25, 2003
Federal: Carbon, Stillwater, Treasure, Sweet Grass, Mussellshell		July 18, 2003
<u>Stage I Restrictions (Lewistown)</u>		July 21, 2003
<u>Stage II Restrictions</u>		
State & Private: Hill, Chouteau, Judith Basin, Petroleum, Blaine, Phillips, Valley, Roosevelt, Sheridan, Fergus, Golden Valley, Daniels		July 21, 2003
Federal: Chouteau, Fergus, Judith Basin, Wheatland		July 25, 2003
<u>Stage I Restrictions (Miles City)</u>		August 04, 2003
State & Private: Richland, Dawson, Wibaux, Prairie, Fallon, McCone, Garfield, Custer, Powder River, Carter, and Rosebud		
Federal: Richland, Dawson, Wibaux, Prairie, Fallon, McCone, Garfield, Custer, Powder River, Carter, and Rosebud counties		

Closures: Information is current as of 08-13-03

Southwest

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest:

Fires and fire fighting have caused several road, trail, and campground closings in the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. Closed roads include # 81 Anderson Mountain Road, west of Wisdom, off Highway 43. Note: The Gibbonsville and Foothills roads, west of Wisdom, are both open now. The Gibbonsville road is open on both sides of the state line.

Bitterroot National Forest:

The Ravalli County Sheriff's Office is contacting area residents just north of the Gold Creek campground and up to the Middle Burnt Fork Road to advise them of the current situation. This is a Stage 1 Alert NOT an evacuation. Public access along the Lost Horse Road beginning at the junction of the Lick Creek Road is temporarily closed due to the current fire activity.

Gallatin National Forest

There is a mandatory closure for all recreation areas south of Aspen Campground on Main Boulder Road. Voluntary evacuations are in effect in the Main Boulder Drainage. Bruffie Lane closed. Forest Service closures include Suce, Mission Creek, Livingston Peak, Blacktail Creek, Rough Draw Trails and a portion of Davis Creek Trail.

Northwest

Flathead National Forest and Glacier National Park:

The temporary evacuation of the Apgar Village area was conducted as a precaution on Monday August 11th. Due to Heavy smoke and to facilitate fire-fighting efforts the Going-To-The Sun Road is temporarily closed from Apgar to Logan Pass a distance of 18 miles. The North Fork Road remains closed from Glacier Rim to the Canadian boarder. The west entrance will be closed at the West Glacier bridge over the Middle Fork of the Flathead River. Sperry Chalet is being evacuated as a precaution in the event of extreme fire behavior. The area north from Lake McDonald and west of the Continental Divide is temporarily closed.

Lolo National Forest

The Sanders County commissioners have issued an evacuation warning for residents in the Eddy Creek Area. In addition the following closures are in effect: Fish Creek Road, Forest Service Road (FSR)343, from Big Pine Point of Interest to the south at the junction with West Fork Fish Creek Wagon Mountain Road, FSR 33, from the junction with Howard Creek, FSR 238, to the east at the junction with Petty Creek Road. The closure will include the following roads on the Plains/Thompson Falls RD: 352, 7614, 7672, 420, 16261, 7600, 7579, 18281, 7581, 18259, 16597, 7583, 17345, 7584, 7585, 7589, 16386, 217, 7581, and 769. Residents and cabin owners in the Fish Creek and Thompson Creek drainages are advised to be alert to possible evacuation notices. The North Howard is also about two miles from structures on private land in the upper Petty Creek drainage and the Graves Creek Area, where the Frenchtown Rural Fire Department has advised residents to be prepared to evacuate. Structure protection plans are in place.